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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2705

March 17, 1995

AMERICANS URGED TO "GET CONNECTED!" -- The Clinton Administration is launching a public education campaign to urge Americans to get on the information superhighway. The announcement was made at news conferences linked via satellite in Washington, DC and Southern California with Secretary of Commerce Ronald Brown and Acting Secretary of Agriculture Richard Rominger. The campaign will demonstrate how access to the National Information Infrastructure (NII), also known as the information superhighway, can help all Americans improve their daily lives. The Clinton Administration's NII initiative seeks to accelerate the development of our nation's information infrastructure and to ensure access to it by all Americans. Students and schools are connecting to some of the best learning institutions in the world, people are receiving medical advice via video technology and some workers are using computers to telecommute. Networks are allowing citizens to obtain helpful information from their local, state and Federal governments. **Contact: Jim Brownlee (202) 720-2091.**

CROP DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS -- Deficiency payments are being made to eligible corn and grain sorghum producers who participated in the 1994 USDA farm programs. Just under \$1.4 billion will be paid to producers through county Consolidated Farm Service Agency offices. The five month deficiency payment rate for corn is .4275 cents, with those producers who received the advance payment rate of .20 cents receiving .2275 cents per bushel. The grain sorghum deficiency payment rate is set at .4425 cents per bushel, with those producers who received the advance payment of .23 cents receiving a payment of .2125 cents per bushel. Any additional deficiency payments will be made in October 1995. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS LICENSES -- USDA is proposing to amend its regulations concerning the manufacture of biological products by clarifying certain provisions concerning licenses, inspections, records and reports. A USDA spokesperson says the purpose is to make sure licensees know that when licenses are issued, it is on the condition that inspection of establishments, products and records is permitted and that one product license must be held in order to maintain a valid establishment license. USDA also proposes to require that detailed records and reports concerning biological products be maintained at the establishment in which the products are produced. **Contact: Cynthia A. Eck (301) 734-5931.**

OPTIONS PILOT PROGRAM -- The target rate strike prices for wheat and corn for the 1995 Options Pilot Program will be \$4.20 and \$2.90 per bushel, the same rates established for the 1994 program. Price support strike prices will be announced at a later date. Participants may purchase put options at either the target rate strike price or the price support equivalent strike price and will be reimbursed for the cost of the premium. Target price users forego deficiency payments and price support benefits on the bushels enrolled in the program. Those using the price support forego price support program benefits. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

MORE TIME TO ISSUE HEALTH DOCUMENTS -- USDA is proposing to allow accredited veterinarians to issue official health documents up to 30 days after inspecting herds or flocks that are under regular health maintenance programs. For animals not under such programs, the proposed regulations would add three additional days to the seven days currently allowed between the inspection and the issuance of official health documents. Currently, accredited veterinarians are required to have conducted the inspection of all flocks and herds within seven days prior to issuing any official health documents. A "regular health maintenance program" would be defined as an arrangement between an accredited veterinarian and a livestock producer to ensure that the veterinarian inspects every animal on each premises once every 30 days. **Contact:** Kendra Pratt (301) 734-6573.

VETERINARY BIOLOGICS -- USDA is proposing to amend its regulation concerning state-federal licensing of veterinary biological products. This would have the effect of not allowing a federally licensed establishment to produce the same veterinary biological product under both a state and federal product license. Autogenous biologics would not be subject to the same requirement, in that a federally licensed establishment could hold both State and Federal product licenses for autogenous biologics but must choose to produce each specific serial of such biologic under either a state or federal product license. However, no autogenous biologic could be produced at the same time under both a federal and state license. **Contact:** Cynthia A. Eck (301) 734-5931.

OFFICIAL AGENCY PILOT PROGRAM -- USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration is proposing pilot programs to allow more than one agency to inspect or weigh grain in a geographic area. Currently, only one agency may provide service in a specified area. Authorized in the 1993 Amendments to the U.S. Grain Standards Act, the pilot programs will provide data on the effect of allowing more than one agency to inspect or weigh grain in a single area. USDA is considering two options and is requesting comments from the public. **Contact:** Dana Stewart (202) 720-5091.

USDA'S BEAGLE BRIGADE -- Canine members of the Department of Agriculture's Beagle Brigade gathered at USDA headquarters to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the program. "USDA's Beagle Brigade" is a group of dogs trained to detect prohibited plants, fruits and meat that could contain plants and pests that compromise the safety of U.S. agricultural products. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service uses the brigade to augment its Plant Protection and Quarantine officers who inspect passenger baggage, mail and cargo at all U.S. ports of entry. The program started with one dog ten years ago, and has expanded to include more than 30 dogs at 19 airports across the United States. All dogs are adopted from animal shelters or through private donation. **Contact:** Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959.

ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL DECISION -- Copies are available of USDA's decision on the final environmental impact statement for its animal damage control program. The decision was reached after extensive analysis by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, using data on the effects of the APHIS animal damage control program on wildlife. Copies of the final environmental impact statement document can be obtained by writing USDA's Animal Damage Control, 4700 River Road, Unit 87, Riverdale, MD 20737-1228. **Contact:** Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1972 -- Going to bat for bats is the subject of this week's Agriculture USA. Gary Crawford talks with experts about bats, their place in our nightmares and their real place in our worlds. (Weekly cassette -- 13-1/2 minute documentary). ****Note to broadcasters:** Beginning with programs aired the week of April 17, Agriculture USA will switch to a shorter, five minute format. See explanation on the last page of this letter.

CONSUMER TIME # 1451 -- President Clinton goes back to school for lunch. Changes on the farm are helping the environment. In search of the Easter egg. USDA celebrates 10th anniversary of the "Beagle Brigade." (Weekly cassette -- consumer features).

AGRITAPE FEATURES # 1963 -- A dairy cow dietary analysis. Conservation compliance is working. The sheep outlook for the next year. Sunflower pests. Corn and grain sorghum deficiency payments. (Weekly cassette -- news features).

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWS LINE -- Tuesday, March 28, weekly weather and crops. Wednesday, March 29, wool and mohair. Thursday, March 30, ag prices. Friday, March 31, prospective plantings; hogs and pigs. Monday, April 3, horticultural trade and export opportunities. Tuesday, April 4, weekly weather and crops; poultry slaughter. Thursday, April 6, dairy products. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our NEWS LINE carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

**USDA RADIO NEWS LINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545
Material changed at 5 p.m., ET, each working day.**

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

ACTUALITIES -- Acting Secretary of Agriculture Richard Rominger and USDA economist Keith Collins speaking at the Alabama Farmers Federation in Washington, D.C. on the Overview and Outlook for Agriculture. APHIS Deputy Administrator B. Glen Lee and Acting Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Program Patricia Jensen honoring USDA's Beagle Brigade program.

FEATURE -- Eric Parsons reports on 1994 corn and grain sorghum deficiency payments.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on USDA and Americorps working together to protect California resources.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

Thursday, 3:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, Telstar 302, Channel 6 (Transponder 3H), (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3820 MHZ. Monday, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET, Galaxy 4, Channel 12 (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3940 MHZ.

OFF MIKE

AGRICULTURE USA...our weekly 13:30 minute documentary, will change to a five minute format beginning the week of April 17. Our recent survey of radio stations using our weekly cassette services indicated that nearly 50 percent of stations **not** programming *Agriculture USA* listed length as the primary reason. Several respondents suggested a five minute length. Fifty-four percent of 260 stations responding reported using this program, but many indicated they excerpted it and did not use the complete program. Yet, many stations wanted us to continue *Agriculture USA* at a shorter length. Thank you for your use of our programs. We hope the new format will be more compatible with your programming needs.

NEW STATION, NEW NAME...Farm Director Kim Spiczka is moving to KNOX in Grand Forks, ND, from WYRQ in Little Falls, MN. Her new air name will be **Kim Douglas**.

CROP INSURANCE DEADLINE...was a lead story this week in Indiana, reports **Darrin Johnston** (AgriAmerica Network, Indianapolis, IN). Darrin has moved from network sales work to join **Gary Truitt** in full-time on-the-air duties for the network which serves 70 Indiana radio stations with newscasts at five minutes before the hour beginning at 4:55 a.m. and continuing until 5:55 p.m. AgriAmerica Network is planning a big celebration soon for their 10th Anniversary. Early planning is underway for their 30-50 county fair visits. Besides news coverage of county and state fairs, they present belt buckles to champion livestock exhibitors in their state.

SPRING IS COMING...and **Dave Andrews** (KZEN, Central City, NE) says with 60 degree temperatures after last week's snowstorm there are signs of green (just in time for St. Patrick's Day). Dave was substituting for **Gary Wulf** who was "under the weather" this week. Gary usually does three agricultural newscasts a day (8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.).



LARRY A. QUINN, Director
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Broadcasters Letter

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